

Greater Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting

March 16, 2017 – North Gilliam County Rural Fire Protection District Building

Advisory Committee members present: Cam Preus, Judge Steve Shaffer, Bob Levy, Melissa Lindsay, Judge Lynn Morley, Mike McLaughlin, Tim Mabry and Fred Flippence (phone).

Also present: Scott Fairley, Regional Solutions; Melisa Drugge, Business Oregon; Ken Patterson, ODOT; Randy Jones, DEQ; Bill Rosholt, Workforce Investment Board; Peter Mitchell, Port of Arlington; Susan Badger Jones, Energy Trust of Oregon; Debbie Starkey, Wheeler County Court; Tami Stockton, Wheeler County Economic Development; Susan Christianson, Greater Eastern Oregon Economic Development Corporation; Scott Edelman, DLCD; Jeremy Austin, Oregon Natural Desert Association.

No public comment addressed to the advisory committee.

Welcoming/introductions

- Executive members of the GEO Advisory Committee include: Mike McLaughlin, Judge Steve Shaffer, Cam Preus, Don Rice, and Tim Mabry
- Advisory committee members representing the counties: Wheeler County Judge Lynn Morley, Morrow County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering, Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton, Malheur County Judge Dan Joyce
- Membership and Terms. Advisory committee appointees serve 3 year terms
 - o Terms up: Dave Tovey, Fred Flippence, Bob Levy
 - o Bob Levy and Fred Flippence expressed interest in continuing their membership on the Advisory Committee and were unanimously approved
 - o Scott will schedule a meeting for the Advisory Committee to discuss additional invited membership

Regional Solutions Program Update

- New Governor's Chief of Staff: Nik Blosser
- New Regional Solutions Director/Jobs and Economy Policy Advisor: Jason Lewis-Berry
- Business Oregon Reorganization: Business Development Officer and Regional Coordinator positions have merged into Regional Development Officer positions. The regions have expanded from 9 to 12 with two RDOs being allocated to the region.
- Governor visits: Focus on youth opportunities and economic development. Trips to the region are being planned.
- Grant Young from the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development passed away in January. Scott Edelman is filling in until the regional position can be refilled.

Budget/Regional Infrastructure Fund

- Key agency budget components relating to economic/community development and Regional Solutions were discussed (attachments were included in the meeting invitation).
- Regional Infrastructure Fund: new rules to dictate how the fund operates. \$11M proposed for the fund, 55% will be divided amongst the 11 regions, to be used by Regional Solutions Advisory Committees. The rest will go towards 'regionally/statewide significant projects.'

Gilliam County Economic Development Update

- Challenges: irrigation, population, housing
- Opportunities: wheat, wind energy (need facilities to aid the industry upgrade/servicing requirements), waste (Waste Management provides over 100 FT jobs), UAS (airports and industrial sites), recreation (Cottonwood State Park, added a fuel dock for boating, and a wind surfing launch. Goal: to draw more people into the community).

Workforce Investment Board Sector Partnership Update

- First launch meeting of the advance manufacturing sector partnership a year ago.

- The goal of EOWB was to make a sector program demonstrating what regional advance manufacturers are/doing/need.
- The Talent committee of the Advance Manufacturing Partnership wants to connect to regional high school students and eventually junior high schoolers.
- RST is coordinating business tours during the month of April. Hoping this will be a model for other school districts and CTE programs.

Regional Solutions Project Updates

- Scott Fairley, Regional Solutions
 - o Grant County Biomass Campus – last negotiation of the contract will be completed soon; grant dollars should be available in spring.
 - o Malheur County Storm Disaster Recovery – the governor visited, ODOT provided road services, funding and assistance resources were made available.
 - o Oregon Solutions: Gilliam County: Housing study will start on Monday; Grant County: helping prioritize their projects; Umatilla Basin: looking at longer term opportunities about ground water nitrate levels.
- Melisa Drugge, Business Oregon
 - o Mushroom Producer: concentrated the search in Umatilla County; moving forward in application process.
 - o City of Umatilla Data Center expansion project: moving forward in application process.
- Randy Jones, DEQ
 - o Torrefaction and Biomass: PGE is committed to the cessation of using coal as a fuel source. Completed a first full scale burn of torrefied biomass. Have five test burns completed. This can address fire loads, prevent wildfires, produce biochar, and potentially create thousands of jobs.
- Ken Patterson, ODOT
 - o Torrefied wood products: restrictions on the length of vehicles that can run on US 395. Looking to expand long vehicle use while retaining safety.
 - o Juntura Cutoff Project: all agreements have been pulled together. Construction will start by next summer.

Area Commission on Transportation Update

- Joint ACT meeting on March 27th at the Baker High School commons, followed by a tour of Baker Technical Institute.
- Solar Eclipse: coordinating opportunities with counties and agencies.
- Roundabouts: expanding education.
- Solid Salt projects: Significant cost savings. Looking to expand that pilot project. Will soon propose timelines for implementation.
- State Transportation Improvement Program: 90\$M over four-year period, new projects due to be adopted by OTC and federal highway by November 2017.

Roundtable/Good of the Order

- GEODC: thumb drive – promotes a new website; proactive focus on infrastructure and housing needs in small communities.
- BMCC will host a Cascadia summit on May 12th, 2017.